

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

The action by the Examiner in this application, together with the references cited, has been given careful consideration. Following such consideration, claim 1 has been amended to define more clearly the patentable invention Applicant believes is disclosed herein. Claims 2, 3 and 6 were previously cancelled and claims 4 and 5 remain unchanged. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider the claims in their present form, together with the following comments, and allow the application.

The present invention is directed to a sanitizable float valve. The valve includes a valve body defining a valve chamber. A fluid inlet and a fluid outlet are formed in the valve body and both are in fluid communication with the valve chamber. A single closing element is disposed in the valve body to move vertically within the valve chamber between an open position and a closed position. The closing element has a partly convex sealing surface and a rounded lower end opposite the sealing surface. The partly convex sealing surface is dimensioned to sealingly engage the fluid inlet of the valve body.

During operation of the present invention, fluid enters the valve body through the fluid inlet. When a predetermined fluid level is achieved, a float causes the closing element to move upward to the closed position. In the closed position, the closing element sealingly engages the fluid inlet such that the fluid inlet is *fluidly isolated* from the valve chamber. In other words, no fluid flows from the fluid inlet to the valve chamber.

Claim 1 has been amended to define that a *single* closing element is placed in a valve chamber of the valve and includes a partly convex sealing surface disposed opposite a rounded lower end thereof. The sealing surface is dimensioned to sealingly engage a fluid inlet of the valve when the closing element is in a closed position to *fluidly isolate* the fluid inlet from the

valve chamber. It is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references discloses a structure as defined in claim 1.

Claims 1, 2 and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,079,438 to Cavagna.

The '438 patent discloses *two (2)* valve elements 11, 20 in a valve chamber. The '438 patent discloses that element 11 moves independent of element 20. As shown in FIG. 2, through holes 15 in valve element 11 fluidly connect a fluid inlet of the valve with the valve chamber in which valve elements 11, 20 are disposed. In this respect, the fluid inlet and the valve chamber are always fluidly connected. The '438 patent does not teach, suggest or show a *single* valve element that includes a sealing surface dimensioned to sealingly engage a fluid inlet of the valve when the single closing element is in the closed position to *fluidly isolate* a fluid inlet from the valve chamber, as defined in claim 1.

Claims 4 and 5 depend from claim 1 and should be allowed for at least the same reasons stated above for claim 1.

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '438 patent to Cavagna in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,793,654 to Bierman.

The '654 patent discloses a float valve made of PTFE. Applicant respectfully submits that the neither the '438 patent nor the '654 patent, taken alone or combined, teaches, suggests or shows a valve as defined in claim 1. Claim 5 depends from claim 1 and is allowable for at least the same reasons stated above for claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in proper condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes there are any further matters which

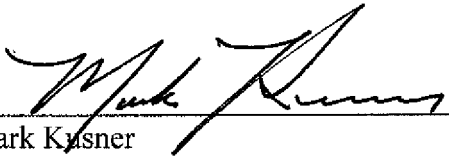
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need to be discussed in order to expedite the prosecution of the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

If there are any fees necessitated by the foregoing communication, please charge such fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0537, referencing our Docket No. ST9175PCT(US).

Respectfully submitted,

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